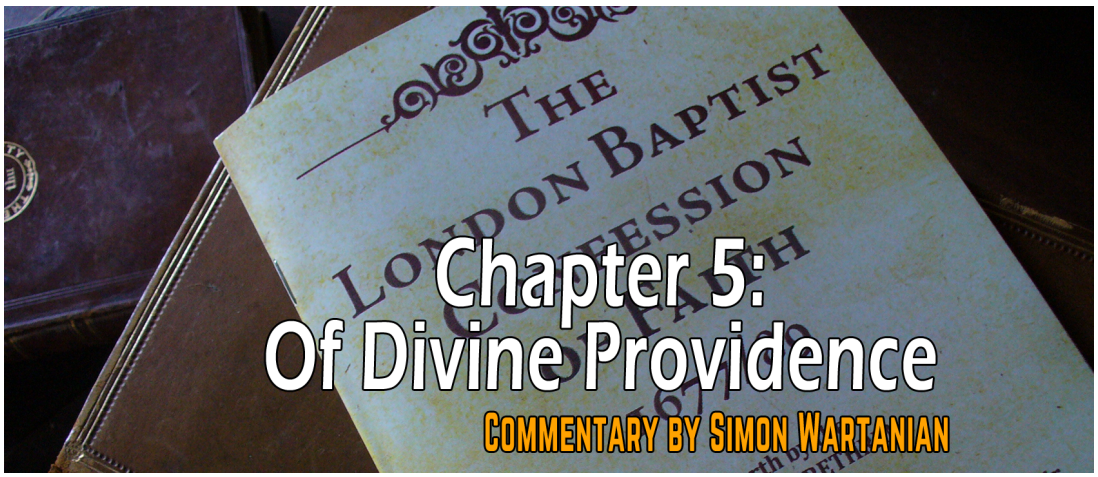
1689 Baptist Confession Chapter 5: Of Divine Providence - Commentary

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Chapter 5: Of Divine Providence

Are divine sovereignty and human responsibility incompatible? What do we mean by providence? How does the providence of God work? Does God use means? How does the providence of God relate to the wicked and the church?

This chapter is in many ways connected with **chapter 3 about God's Decree**. Therefore, the interested reader is directed there for more about God's divine sovereignty.

§1 God the good Creator of all things

1. **God the good Creator** of all things, **1** in his infinite power and wisdom **2** doth **uphold**, **direct**, **dispose**, and **govern** **3** all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, **4** by his **most wise and holy providence, 5** to **the end for the which they were created, 6** according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the **free and immutable counsel of his own will; 7** to the **praise of the glory of his** wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy. **8**
    1. Gen. 1:31; 2:18; Ps. 119:68[1]
    2. Ps. 145:11; Prov. 3:19; Ps. 66:7
    3. Heb. 1:3; Isa. 46:10-11; Dan. 4:34-35; Ps. 135:6; Acts 17:25-28; Job 38-41
    4. Matt. 10:29-31
    5. Prov. 15:3; Ps. 104:24; 145:17
    6. Col. 1:16-17; Acts 17:24-28
    7. Ps. 33:10-11; Eph. 1:11
    8. Isa. 63:14; Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:17; Gen. 45:7; Ps. 145:7

God the good Creator is the One Who is sovereign over all things and the One who **upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures and things** (Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:11; Isa. 46:10-11; Ps. 115:3; 135:6; Rev. 4:11). His sovereignty extends **from the greatest even to the least** (Matt. 10:29-31). God is as much concerned about little things as He is about big things because they all work out for His glory and according to His most wise plan. By **His most wise and holy providence**, He has assigned an **end** and purpose for everything that was created (e.g., Prov. 16:4). This was done according to God's **infallible foreknowledge** of that which He has ordained and according to **the free and immutable counsel of His own will**. The purpose for disposing and directing all things as He does is **to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness, and mercy** which is seen in His providence.

Providence may be defined as:

> Divine providence is the governance of God by which He, with wisdom and love, cares for and directs all things in the universe. The doctrine of divine providence asserts that God is in complete control of all things. He is sovereign over the universe as a whole (Psalm 103:19), the physical world (Matthew 5:45), the affairs of nations (Psalm 66:7), human destiny (Galatians 1:15), human successes and failures (Luke 1:52), and the protection of His people (Psalm 4:8).[2]

It is the God, the *good* Creator, Who governs and directs every step in the universe. He is the standard of goodness. He means and intends everything for good (defined by Himself), while man means it for evil (Gen. 50:20). Everything He does is most holy and wise, free and immutable, and for His glory (Isa. 46:8-11). He upholds the universe by the power of His word and He directs history to its predetermined end (Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:11). He disposes of good and evil and governs every molecule and atom the way He pleases (Dan. 4:34-35; Isa. 45:7; Ps. 115:3; 135:6; Eph. 1:11). Why? To the glorification of His attributes! See **chapter 4** for the purpose of creation. This is closely connected with God's decree in **chapter 3** (see the commentary there). God's sovereign decree could be seen as the blueprint of history, while God's Providence is the execution of that blueprint or plan.

§2 God, the First Cause

2. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the **first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly;** so that there is not anything befalls any by chance, or without his providence; **1** yet **by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes,** either necessarily, freely, or contingently. **2**
    1. Acts 2:23; Prov. 16:33
    2. Gen. 8:22; Jer. 31:35; Ex. 21:13; Deut. 19:5; Isa. 10:6-7; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 27:31; Matt. 5:20-21; Phil. 1:9; Prov. 20:18; Luke 14:25ff; Prov. 21:31; 1 Kings 22:28, 34; Ruth 2:3

God is **the first cause** of all things and **all things come to pass immutably and infallibly** in relation to His **foreknowledge and decree** (Acts 2:23; Prov. 16:33; Isa. Isa. 37:26; 46:8-11). Although God is the **first cause** of all things, yet **by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes**. In other words, all things are carried out willingly by the **second causes** (e.g., humans). They are not forced to do that which God has ordained, but willingly carry out His sovereign decree because He orders all things. His providence is so vast and so without limits that there is no **chance** and nothing comes to pass **without His providence**. All things come to pass by His providence and the **second causes**, either **necessarily**, **freely**, or **contingently**. **Necessarily** has to do with the nature and order of things as God has created them and what we commonly call the laws of nature. **Freely** has to do with volitional agents as men and angels. They **freely** carry out God's providence and are not hindered by His providence, neither is their freedom violated nor blame or praise taken away. **Contingently** means things which are dependent upon others. There are no contingent events to God, but for us, many things are contingent and dependent upon many other things. Even these are ordered by His most wise providence.

He is the primary and first cause, even of sin, but not the doer thereof. As affirmed in **3:6** and will be affirmed **here below**, God has not decreed what He has willed and left it alone. Rather, He guides it to its predetermined end by the means He decrees. God's decree is His sovereign plan and blueprint. God's providence is the working out of that decree in actual history. God's sovereignty does not "violate" man's will or coerces him to do something against his will, but works according to the nature of second causes, that is, the nature of man and his abilities. Look at **chapter 3** for God's sovereignty over evil and His eternal decree where it is shown that God is absolutely sovereign over everything including sin, yet sinless.

§3 God Uses Means

3. God, in his ordinary **providence maketh use of means,** **1** yet is free to work without, **2** above, **3** and against them **4** at his pleasure.
    1. Acts 27:22, 31, 44; Isa. 55:10-11; Hosea 2:21-22
    2. Hosea 1:7; Luke 1:34-35
    3. Rom. 4:19-21
    4. Ex. 3:2-3; 2 Kings 6:6; Dan. 3:27

God ordains the ends as well as the **means** (**chapter 3:6**). Yet this does not mean that God is limited by those means. He has worked **without** those means in the case of the virgin birth of our Lord (Luke 1:34-35). He has worked **above** the means when He gave Abraham a child from Sarah when she was passed the age of bearing children (Rom. 4:19-21). He has worked **against** the means when a bush was burning but was not consumed (Ex. 3:2-3).

This seems impossible to non-Calvinists, don't ask me why, but they always seem to think that if God is truly sovereign, then we can't be free or can't make "genuine choices," or that we should just sit and do nothing. I've never understood that aspect of anti-Calvinism. The Scriptures teach both God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. A simple example is found in Philippians 2:12-13:

> Phil. 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, 13 **for it is God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Why would Paul say to the Philippians to work out (not work *for*) their salvation if in the next verse He says that it's God Who does it? Because Paul understands that God makes use of means. God commands us to do certain things, grants us the grace to perform them and works His sovereign will through that. Another example is in Acts 27. Paul is on a sinking ship.

> Acts 27:21-25 Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. 22 Yet now I urge you to take heart, for **there will be no loss of life among you**, but only of the ship. 23 For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 24 and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, **God has granted you all those who sail with you**.' 25 So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.

God had promised Paul to save him and those who are with him in the ship from death, but how? Does it matter how these people act or what they do? The Scripture further says:

> Acts 27:31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "**Unless these men stay in the ship**, **you cannot be saved**."

Some people tried to escape from the ship, but God had determined to save only those who remain on the ship. God's sovereignty worked out through the men staying *in* the ship. God used the means of the men staying on the ship to save them from death. Many more examples could be given, but we must believe that God ordains the ends as well as the means thereto. God didn't just decree to save these men, no matter what. What if some of them tried to commit suicide, or jumped in the water, or tried to kill each other. God had decreed to save all of them, therefore, it doesn't matter what they do, right? Wrong! See also **paragraph 6** of **chapter 3**.

Dr. Sam Waldron comments on the second paragraph, which is also relevant here, writing:

> A course of events consisting of a series of free and contingent events is said to produce a predetermined result. The proof of this statement is the many places in which free or random actions are the necessary conditions of divinely determined events (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 27:23-24, 31; Matt. 5:20; Phil. 1:19; Prov. 20:18; Luke 14:25-33). Victory in war is predetermined (Prov. 21:31), but careful preparation of your equipment (Prov. 21:31) and wise guidance are recommended (Prov. 20:18). The random shot of the Syrian bowman was the means of bringing about the

predetermined death of Ahab (1 Kings 22:28, 34). Ruth was a gift of the Lord to Boaz (Prov. 19:14), but she met him by coincidence (Ruth 2:3). Understanding that God controls the world through means should keep us from three things.[3]

God ordains both the ends as well as the means. An instance of God working **above** and/or **against the means** is when He works supernaturally, as in the virgin birth of Christ, and Sarah bearing Isaac in her old age. The natural course of things do not allow such things, but such is the power of God that He transcends what is natural and normal, and can work over and against these. Not that these things are external to God or something. Rather, these are laws which He Himself has instituted, and sometimes, for His purposes, it pleases Him to work above and against them.

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§4 His determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that **his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall**, and **all other sinful actions** both of angels and men; **1** and that **not by a bare permission**, which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; **2** yet so, as the **sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures,** and not from God, who, being **most holy and righteous**, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin. **3**
    1. Rom. 11:32-34; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Sam. 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28
    2. Acts 14:16; 2 Kings 19:28; Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:6, 7, 12
    3. James 1:13. 14. 17; 1 John 2:16; Ps. 50:21

The sovereign providence and **almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God** extends itself **even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions**. Nothing is left outside His sovereign providence. Nothing is left to chance and nothing happens outside of His most wise and holy decree. And this ordering and disposing of things sinful is not **by a bare permission**, meaning that He allowed it while having no purpose in it. Rather, **He most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth** for His **most holy ends** and purposes. The decree and providence of God give a purpose and reason for everything. There is no such thing as purposeless evil. It may appear purposeless to us, but it is not so with God Who ordained and caused it to be. In all this, God is untainted by sin and is not **the author or approver of sin**. In fact, He punishes sinners even when carrying out His decree (see Isa. 10 **here**). The **sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures**, while God has **most holy and righteous** ends for ordaining their sins. This could be seen in the case of Joseph when he tells his brothers, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today” (Gen. 50:20). God’s “meaning’ was good, while the brothers’ was “evil” all the while it concerned the event of selling Joseph to slavery. It was one action or event with two different motives and purposes. The brothers were not excused because they were carrying God’s decree. Their intention is still called “evil” and this sinfulness came from them and not from God.

Even over the Fall of Adam and Satan, God had absolute sovereignty and predetermination. It didn’t catch God by a surprise. In fact, He was expecting it by creating Adam as a *type* of Christ (Rom. 5:14) and electing a people to be *holy* and *blameless,* which would presuppose that they were not holy and blameless, in Christ (Eph. 1:3-6). While there is a lot of speculation as to how the Fall exactly occurred, or how sin entered the world, God’s sovereignty over it should not and cannot be denied based on everything we see in Scripture. God is sovereign over every single sin and He has so ordained that they exist, yet He is not to be charged with unrighteousness, but the creature is to be charged with wickedness. He ordains all sins for the glory of His Name and not for the sake of “free will.” Again, I refer you back to **chapter 3** and the brief case for God’s sovereignty over evil there.

God does not merely permit sinful actions, but He decrees that they exist and happen. The greatest example of this is the cross of Christ (Acts 2:23; 4:26-28), which we discussed in **chapter 3**. Sometimes the language of permission is used by Calvinists to speak of God’s relation to sin and evil, but our intention in such a language is not to say that God does not *will* it, but to separate the holiness of God and the sinfulness of the actions which men do. For non-Calvinists, the idea of permission is often used to imply that God in some way is not pleased or does not will the actions to happen, but He does not want to interfere with human (libertarian) free will, so as not to destroy (true) freedom. But generally, I would speak of

God decreeing sin and evil, as that is what I believe the Scripture teaches, for His own glory, while He nevertheless remains pure and sinless, unstained by sin and evil. Lamar Martin, in his exposition of this chapter, comments on this phrase, "bare permission", saying:

> The point being that the sinful actions of angels and men are not in a passive way simply allowed by God, but rather God is actively directing, disposing, and governing these sinful actions. God permits sin, yes, Acts 14, verse 16: "Who in the generations gone by allowed all nations to walk in their own ways." But He does not simply sit back and permit sin; according to the Confession, He bounds it, that is, He limits it, He orders it, He governs it, and that to produce His most holy ends. And clearly God does limit sin.[4]

He does not permit or ordain evil for its sake, or to respect the "free will" of man, but rather, He ordains and decrees evil for the good which He purposes it to bring and the judgment which He will bring upon it, and thus display the glory of His justice. If God would have willed sin for the sake of sin, it would have been a blemish on His character. But for God to will sin for the sake of the good intended, it is a manifestation of His infinite wisdom and sovereignty.

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§5 Leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes **leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruptions** of their own hearts, to **chastise them for their former sins,** or to **discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts,** that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant **dependence for their support upon himself;** and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for other just and holy ends. **1** So that **whatsoever befalls any of his elect is by his appointment, for his glory,** and their good. **2**
    1. 2 Chron. 32:25-26, 31; 2 Sam. 24:1; Luke 22:34-35; Mark 14:66f; John 21:15-17
    2. Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 12:7-9

Our God is called **most wise, righteous, and gracious**, therefore, we know that He intends His providence and decree for our good and His glory. By His providence, he **chastises** us for our sins, shows us the **corruption and deceitfulness** of our hearts when He gives us more freedom to sin. This He does to **humble** us and bring us **closer** to Himself and so as to teach us to **depend** upon Him. He shows us the remaining corruptions in such so that we would learn what we're capable of without Him and we would be **more watchful against all future occasions of sin**. This we may be assured of, whatsoever God ordains concerning the elect, it is for **their** own **good**, according to His gracious promise (Rom. 8:28).

God leaves some of His children to see the effects of sin, not because He has abandoned them, but for them to see from what they're saved and the grace of God towards them. When we see our wickedness and the sinfulness of sin, we can truly appreciate and praise the goodness and grace of God. I truly am thankful that the gracious and most merciful Lord has not exposed my sin to me that deeply that I am left without hope, but has been greatly merciful toward me. Thank you, Lord, for restraining me from sinning against You, and have not given me over to my sin, which I certainly deserve and much more. Cleanse me, for Your Name's sake; cleanse and protect all Your precious saints, Father!

Nothing comes to our path apart from the sovereign providence of God. There is no comfort in excluding God from the evil things that befall us, rather we acknowledge that He has brought them upon us for His glory and our good. Not because He hates us, because He did not spare His only Son for us all, how will He not give us all things?! In no way is God's providence hateful to His children, but is meant to be for their good, according to His sovereign promise (Rom. 8:28). Job, after all the tragedy that came upon him, did not find excuses in free will, or cast any doubt upon the providence and sovereignty of God, rather, he declared, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Such is the strong faith, which trusts and rests in God alone and seeks all things from Him alone, and sees all things coming ultimately from Him alone. In Job 1:20, we are told that not only did Job bless the name of the LORD (v. 21), but he rose and worshiped the Lord in spite of all the tragedy that came upon him. At the end of the book of Job, and when all his fortunes are restored, his family comes to him and it is said that "they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him" (Job 42:11). Not only does Job acknowledge that his suffering and this evil has come from God, without being in sin (Job 1:21-22; 2:10), but the Author Himself credits the evil and suffering that came upon Job and

His suffering ultimately to God. We know that Satan was in the background also, but Job acts as if he does not even exist and doesn't say a word about him!

Even the persecution which comes upon the people of God is for their good since nothing can separate them from the love of God and in all these things they show themselves to be more than conquerors (Rom. 8:28-39). In Daniel 11:35, it is said, whatever time this speaks about is irrelevant, what matters is the principle communicated, that "some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be **refined**, **purified**, and **made white**, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time." There is a reason for the stumbling of the wise, i.e., the righteous. It is not so that they may fall from the faith, or that they may be destroyed, rather, that they may be purified under the fires of persecution and have their faith confirmed to them.

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§6 The Providence of God as it relates to the Wicked

6. As for those **wicked and ungodly men** whom God, as the **righteous judge,** for former sin **doth blind and harden; 1** from them he not only **withholdeth his grace,** whereby they might have been enlightened in their understanding, and wrought upon their hearts; **2** but sometimes also **withdraweth the gifts** which they had, **3** and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; **4** and withal, **gives them over to their own lusts,** the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, **5** whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, under those means which God useth for the softening of others. **6**
    1. Rom. 1:24-26, 28; 11:7-8
    2. Deut. 29:4
    3. Matt. 13:12; 25:29
    4. Deut. 2:30; 2 Kings 8:12-13
    5. Ps. 81:11-12; 2 Thess. 2:10-12
    6. Ex. 7:3; 8:15, 32; 2 Cor. 2:15-16; Isa. 6:9-10; 8:14; 1 Peter 2:7-8; Acts 28:26-27; John 12:39-40

His providence does not only concern and extend over the elect, but also the reprobate. God **doth blind and harden** (e.g., Rom. 1:24, 26, 28) them as punishment for **former sin** and **withholdeth His** (saving) **grace** from them, although they are never without His common grace. Grace is by definition unearned and undeserved. He does them no wrong by withholding His grace. In punishing and blinding them, He is giving them what they deserve for their wickedness and sin against Him. Not only that, but He sometimes even **withdraweth the gifts which they had** (Matt. 13:12; 25:29) and gives them over to their sin, as punishment (e.g., Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). When God gives them over to their sin, they in return **harden themselves** against God and although those same means God uses to **the softening of others**. Those means harden the reprobate even more while softening others, even among the reprobate when God blesses His people through godless people or vice-versa (e.g., Gen. 39:5, 21-23).

He is God, the Righteous, the Most High, the Most Holy and Pure. He cannot stand in the presence of sin. He hates all sin, but not only the sin but the *sinner himself* too (e.g., Ps. 5:5-6). To punish the wicked, God gives them more freedom in their sins and does not restrain them as He does the elect. Hell is where all restraint is taken away both from the wrath of God and from the sinners themselves.

God hardens the wicked and gives them over to their sins (Isa. 6:9-10; 29:9-10; 44:18-20; 63:17; 64:7; Matt. 11:25-26; 13:13-14; John 12:37-40; Rom. 1:24-28; 9:16-18; 11:7-8). In fact, Peter says that the stumbling of the wicked is predestined by God. 1 Peter 2:8 says, "They stumble because they disobey the word, **as they were destined to do**." He does give them common grace and shows His common love for them (1 Sam. 2:6-8, Ps. 145:9; Matt. 5:45; 1Tim. 4:10), but the effectual grace and covenantal love of God is only given to those in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:39) because all God's promises are in Him (2 Cor. 1:20). God withheld His saving grace from the Israelites in the wilderness and there was not a single obligation on Him to actually give them grace. Moses tells the Israelites of his day, "But to this day the **LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see** or ears to hear" (Deut. 29:4). They—along with me and everyone else in the world, deserve nothing but the wrath of God. When God gives them what they deserve, He is serving justice and doing that which is right. He is not doing anything wrong to them. Remember, there is no obligation on God to display any grace and mercy to sinners, yet the Scripture states that "his mercy is over all that he has made" (Ps. 145:9). The patience of God with us is merely His great mercy displayed to those who deserve nothing but His righteous and swift judgment.

In Romans 1, three times, the hardening and punishment of God on present sin is said to be a giving over of God to more sin. Because people became idolatrous and traded the glory of the true God for dumb idols, "Therefore **God gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity" (Rom. 1:24). It is like God said, "is sin what you want? Okay, here, I will give you over to your sin so that you will commit more sin." And because they went into idolatry and "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25), God says, "For this reason **God gave them up** to dishonorable passions" (Rom. 1:26). He sends more sin to them and gives them more freedom in sin than they had as a *punishment* on *present* sin. As it has been observed by wise theologians, the punishment of sin is more sin. From the second "giving up" of God comes homosexuality and lesbianism (Rom. 1:26-27), and then the apostle says, "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, **God gave them up** to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done" (Rom. 1:28). There is a progression of wickedness and sinfulness, and it is a miserable and wicked path to Hell. When God brings judgment on these people by giving them over to their sins, He is doing that which is right to those who sin against Him. These are not some innocent people whom God is punishing, but these are criminals and rebels against the Lord of heaven and earth. Take a look at **chapter 3**, paragraph 3 where I try to lay a case out for **reprobation**.

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§7 The Providence of God as it relates to His Church

7. As the providence of God doth in general reach to **all creatures**, so after a **more special manner it taketh care of his church**, and disposeth of all things to the good thereof. **1**
    1. Prov. 2:7-8; Isa. 43:3-5, 14; Amos 9:8-9; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11, 22; 3:10-11, 21; 1 Tim. 4:10

The promise of Romans 8:28 is given to **His church**. It is for them that "all things work together for good". The Lord Christ is given as head over all things "to the church" (Eph. 1:22). He exercises His sovereign rule for the good of the church and **disposeth of all things to the good thereof**. What a comfort and what a blessing to know that all things work together for our good and that nothing is outside of His control.

It is only the elect—the church of God, the people of God, that have received the promise of Romans 8:28. For the reprobate, everything works for the bad and for more condemnation. For the sake of the righteous, the godless often are blessed (e.g., Gen. 39:2-4). Joseph found favor with Potiphar because the Lord was with Him and God gave success both to Joseph and Potiphar, because of Joseph's presence. Laban says to Jacob, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that **the LORD has blessed me because of you**" (Gen. 30:27). God takes care of all His creation, but especially of His covenant people, and He often blesses the godless for their sake.

The love of God for His own is shown in Isaiah 43:3-5, 14 in how God gives other nations away as "ransom" for His covenant people. He regards these people as nothing compared to the love that He has for Israel, His covenant people, which He brought up from the Babylonian captivity. Why? "Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you" (Isa. 43:4). The love of God for His people is incomparable to the common grace and love which He displays toward the godless. God does not give His people up for the sake of the wicked, but He does give the wicked up for the sake of His people. Although it is true that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth", it is especially true that they do so as "to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him" (2 Chron. 16:9). Although the Lord Christ is God and ruler over all things (e.g., Matt. 28:18), yet He is especially given *to* His church (Eph. 1:22). King Jesus exercises His sovereign reign for the good of His people to whom He is given as ruler over all things, even for those who persecute them (Rev. 1:5). Although God is the Savior, i.e., Preserver and Protector, of all people without exception, yet He is "especially" the Savior of His people who believe in Him (1Tim. 4:10).

It is those, chosen by God, who are promised that God works everything for their good, what a blessing. We, wicked sinners, loved by an infinitely holy, righteous, pure and sovereign God! Amazing Grace. We have not earned it, we are not only undeserving, but we are also *ill-deserving*—we deserve God's punishment. But His grace in Jesus Christ through faith in Him and repentance toward God saves the most wretched of sinners!

He is the radiance of the glory

of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

(Hebrews 1:3)

Footnotes

1. ^ *Many Scriptural references have been supplied by Samuel Waldron's Modern Exposition of 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith which was apparently supplied by the Westminster Confession of Faith 1646.*
2. ^ *Got Questions. What is divine providence?*
3. ^ *Sam E. Waldron. A Modern Exposition Of The 1689 Baptist Confession Of Faith. (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2013). p. 106.*
4. ^ *Lamar Martin. The London Baptist Confession of Faith | Exposition of Chapter 5. Herald of Grace.*